

# HUMAK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

## MA-THESIS

## **Interpreters at Terminology Work: Views to Professional Development, Language Policy and Language Management**

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Degree Programme in Sign Language Interpreting (EUMASLI, 90 ECTS)

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### ABSTRACT

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<b>Title</b> Interpreters at terminology work: views to professional development, language policy and language management	
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<b>Abstract</b> <p>This study aims to introduce an approach to terminology work, specifically an online terminology database established and maintained by a group of sign language interpreters (SLIs), and to examine the role of the terminology work in relation to the professional development of the practitioners and in relation to issues of language policy, management and planning.</p> <p>The term bank in question was established and published online by Via Sign Language Sector Cooperative in Finland and is used by Via members, employees and customers, some 100 people altogether. The study introduces the term bank, its principles of use before setting out to investigate how it is being used currently. I want to investigate if there are routines for when and to what purposes it is being used and whether efforts are being made to achieve systematic and conscious professional development. Through these ideas I aimed to arrive at a realistic understanding of the bank's usage and of the willingness and ability of its users to develop the tool further by delivering new material and by commenting on existing content. The results are used to evaluate the term bank's role as a tool for professional development, particularly on the development of metalinguistic awareness. The method of terminology work is also reflected with theory of language policy and management, particularly on corpus planning.</p> <p>The data for this study is collected through carrying out an online survey for the current users of the term bank, embedding both qualitative and quantitative elements. As requested by the administration of the term bank, it sets to find out whether the employees use the term bank according to the employer's expectations and whether they consider it as a suitable tool for developing their professional skills. The personal involvement of the researcher with the examined subject as a member of the administration of the tool provides an insight to this study.</p> <p>The results of the survey suggest that enhancing interpreters' professional development through terminology work can affect their metalinguistic awareness and eventually help them to provide better quality service. At the same time it is acknowledged that such terminology work needs to be aware of its implications towards the minority language involved and that the work should adhere to existing language policy. The results of this study indicate a strong motivation to involve native FinSL users more in the terminology work. The results propose the need for further research in the field of Sign Language Studies of how new terminology comes into existence and evolves in such cooperative efforts. The field of Interpreting Studies could benefit from further research on the interpreters' process of developing metalinguistic skills.</p> <p>While this study examines the situation of interpreters in Finland, working with one of the country's minority languages, Finnish Sign Language (FinSL), the author proposes that the results of this study offer new perspectives for interpreters and for interpreting in general. It also suggests that terminology work carried out by interpreters is an act of language management and can be one way of responding to the expectations set by the current language policy.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Sign language interpreting, terminology bank, professional development, metalinguistic awareness, language policy, language management, language planning	

**Declaration**

I declare that the thesis embodies the results of my own work and has been composed by myself. Where appropriate within the thesis I have made full acknowledgement to the work and ideas of others or have made reference to work carried out in collaboration with other persons. No other sources or tools have been used other than those cited in the bibliography. I understand that as an examination candidate I am required to abide by the examination regulations and to conform to my university's regulations, discipline and ethical policy.

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# 1 Introduction

This study aims to introduce an approach to terminology work, specifically an online terminology database maintained by a group of sign language interpreters (SLIs), and to examine the role of the terminology work in relation to the professional development of the practitioners and in relation to issues of language policy, management and planning.

The term bank in questions was established and published online by Via Sign Language Sector Cooperative in Finland and is used by Via members, employees and customers, some 100 people altogether. The study introduces the term bank, its principles of use before setting out to investigate how it is being used currently via an online survey. I wanted to investigate if there are routines for when and to what purposes it is being used and whether efforts are being made to achieve systematic and conscious professional development. It was also interesting to find out how the users feel about using it; do they consider it a functional and comfortable tool? Through these ideas and questions I aimed to arrive at a realistic understanding of the bank's usage and of the willingness and ability of its users to develop the tool further by delivering new material and by commenting on existing content.

I evaluate the results of the online survey, focusing on the professional development of interpreters and particularly on the development of metalinguistic awareness. I also reflect on the Via Cooperative's approach to terminology work in relation to theories of language policy, management and planning, particularly corpus planning.

While this study examines the situation of interpreters in Finland, working with one of the country's minority languages, Finnish Sign Language (FinSL), I propose that the results of this study offer new perspectives for interpreters and for interpreting in general. The action of collecting and studying terminology is commonly practiced individually with a focus on particular assignments, whereas in the case of the Via term bank this action is approached collectively, and both the process and its outcomes are shared.

## 1.1 Rationale

Interpreters of all languages are expected to have language skills comparable to language skills of bilinguals (Pöschhacker 2004:167). Only a few students in Finnish Sign Language Interpreter programmes know Finnish Sign Language prior to their training (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010:44). The majority are still new learners in one of their working languages when graduating after approximately four years of

training. Bilingual or not, all interpreters have a constant need upon graduation to revise and develop their language skills and to be ready to expand those skills as necessary when entering new fields of work.

Interpreters are not professionals in terminology work, they are, however professional language users who need to be aware of and sensitive to sometimes enormous linguistic variations, whether regional, social, contextual or idiolectal. Such awareness and sensitivity is especially crucial when working with a language minority, for whom smooth, functioning interpreting plays a key role in realising the fundamental freedom of expression and opinion through the form of communication of the person's choice (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol 2006:14). Through their professional role, interpreters are in the forefront of observing trends, new features and new lexicon of language and required to be able to comprehend and produce them appropriately.

To be able to recognize linguistic variation requires firstly the recognition of general forms of the grammar and vocabulary of the language in question. As Timothy Reagan notes (2010:34), “for languages that have been standardized, the socially accepted norms have been, at least in part, determined and are widely shared and generally accepted by speakers of the language.”. Such is often the case in relation to spoken or written majority languages, but in the case of, for example, FinSL, the standard language form is not regulated or established in the same way as in Finnish or Swedish, which have a strong literary culture already adopted through school education (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010:10). The next section reviews the current state of FinSL and the lexical tools available.

## **1.2 The current state of FinSL**

This section presents the current state of FinSL as described in the Language Policy for Sign Languages of Finland (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010) and examines the connections of that state to the professional competence of interpreters and lexical tools available for them. Notably, Finland has two national sign languages: Finnish and Finland-Swedish Sign Language, while this study focuses only on the case of FinSL.

The Language Policy for Sign Languages of Finland aims at equal linguistic rights for people using sign language in Finland (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010). It presents several recommendations for clearing obstacles inhibiting FinSL users from participating in society. The policy regards linguistic rights as a part of fundamental rights of

all citizens and sees interpreting as one of the most important services for deaf people, because interpreting offers deaf people opportunities to obtain equal participation and equal access to information (ibid.).

Standard FinSL consists of clear sentence structure, a clear articulation of signs and an avoidance of dialectal and colloquial signs (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010:10-11). The limited amount of researched knowledge of the basic structure of FinSL presents an additional challenge, and existing dictionaries describe only a small part of very basic lexicon (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010:44). Those dictionaries completely exclude polysynthetic lexicon and idiolects which play a central role in FinSL (Rainò 2006). Thus a language learner faces a substantial challenge in making a difference between the required standard language forms from the lexicon that should be avoided.

The basic FinSL lexicon has been documented in 'Suvi', a dictionary with both online and printed versions (Finnish Association of the Deaf & Research Institute for the Languages of Finland 2003) consisting of almost 1400 entries each including several example sentences of their use. Suvi aims to present FinSL as Finnish deaf people use it in their daily lives (ibid.). It does not give normative guidelines on a recommended lexicon (ibid.). As such, the Suvi online dictionary is one of the few tools for FinSL interpreters can use to support their lexical choices in the various situations of their daily work. Considering its limited size and lack of regional, social or idiolectal variations, Suvi remains a very basic tool for interpreters.

Bilingual dictionaries are fundamental but more or less rigid means of recording existing and often quickly-changing language. Päivi Rainò (2006:236) suggests that "[T]he problem could be solved [by] constructing a virtual, non-traditional monolingual sign language dictionary". Unarguably this would be a more satisfying way of presenting the polysynthetic nature of any sign language and its lexicon. Rainò (2006:239) also states that in interpreting between Finnish and FinSL, interpreters are often left with the task of trying to translate the condensed language of a specified, professional field into a language relying widely on idiolectal variation and polysyntheticism.

The task of planning and managing sign language related issues in Finland has been assigned legally to the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland (Laki kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskuksesta 1996). The practical work is carried out by Sign Language Board, which meets four times a year with one sign language researcher (Research Institute for the Languages of



Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010:65). The task of the board is to take part in discussions concerning the development of sign languages of Finland and to offer general recommendations on the use of these languages. An important part of the board's work is also to issue political statements on the status of the languages concerned (ibid.).

The Language Policy for Sign Languages of Finland suggests that the Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for ensuring continuous and sufficient funding for basic research, for dictionary work, and for language planning (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010:65). The language policy document also recommends that text corpus services for both Finnish and Finland-Swedish Sign Language to be established and maintained by government funding so as to secure the availability and permanence of those services. Material for the corpus should be acquired and analysed linguistically by several parties working in cooperation (ibid.).

The Language Policy for Sign Languages of Finland devotes one section to interpreting in which it discusses the professional competence of interpreters from several viewpoints (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010:42-45). The policy requires that particular attention be paid to the professional skills of interpreters working in basic education, so as to ensure that the linguistic stimuli offered through interpreting support the linguistic development of deaf children. Moreover, the interpreter must perceive the subject matters of the education in question from a pedagogical perspective in order to be able to convey the subject matter in a linguistically correct manner (ibid.).

The quality of interpreting services is a much debated issue within the language community, debate that signals discontent over the professional skills of the interpreters (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010:42-45). On the other hand, the policy recognizes that a part of interpreters' knowledge remains unexploited, namely the professional terminology developed during educational interpreting of specific fields. This terminology could, the policy implies, be beneficial to interpreting situations in working life (ibid.).

The language policy document recognizes that interpreting needs and the requirements for successful interpreting vary depending on the situation at hand; for example, medical conditions can affect the memory or the motor functions of a language user (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010:42-44). It is evident that such a situation requires that an interpreter have exceptionally good linguistic competence and a

profound knowledge of culture (ibid.). At the same time, the policy recognizes a problematic that the majority of interpreters start in the profession with only four years of training, assuming that they start their FinSL studies from scratch (ibid.). The situation is even more challenging by the scarcity of research available on the grammar of FinSL and because the existing dictionaries describe only a small part of the sign lexicon. These factors all contribute to the huge variation in the linguistic and interpreting skills of interpreters, leading to an inconsistent quality of service (ibid.).

Compiling terminology from different fields in terminology banks and glossaries can offer one first-hand way of sharing knowledge about language variation and the challenges of professional terminology. Examples in FinSL include collections of healthcare signs (Finnish Association of the Deaf 2008) produced in co-operation with practicing interpreters, and the Professional Sign Lexicon (Bovallius College, Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Finnish Association of the Deaf Sign Language Unit & The Finnish National Board of Education 2011). Such glossaries, though restricted in content, can be helpful when searching for specialised lexicon in the various fields chosen. They also document some sign variation on some terms in those fields. They are, however, quite rigidly constructed and do not easily accept additions of new terminology or comments on the use of the terminology presented.

In addition to examining the Language Policy for Sign Languages of Finland, it is worthwhile to note the general orientation of support for the status of FinSL in a few other political documents. The Ministry of Justice of Finland recently released a memorandum on the development of the linguistic rights of FinSL users (Ministry of Justice of Finland 2011). The memorandum argues that although the rights of FinSL users were secured by the Finnish constitution in 1995, there is considerable variation in how those rights are taken into account by other laws and that a gap exists between the legal status of FinSL and the implementation of reforms concerning FinSL and its users (ibid.).

In line with the recommendations of the Language Policy for Sign Languages of Finland, the federal assembly of the Finnish Association of the Deaf declared in their 2010 meeting, that a special Sign Language Act should be drawn up and approved as soon as possible so to secure the linguistic rights of FinSL users (Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010). This was recognized in the current Government Programme of Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen's Government (2011); the Government Programme states specifically that the implementation of the rights of sign language users will be advanced and the possibility to set a Sign Language Act will be examined.

The above findings draw a picture of the current state of FinSL within official language policy. The expectation and challenge presented to sign language interpreting is clearly articulated: the quality of interpreting needs to be improved to secure full linguistic rights to sign language users regardless of the complexity in learning the natural features and nuances of the language. Next section introduces one solution created by interpreters to address these challenges.

### 1.3 Via term bank

Sign Language Sector Cooperative Via has established a term bank to offer their staff a platform for interactive, evolving grass root terminology work on a wide range of fields. The initial idea for creating this tool came from interpreters. Having been personally involved with the administration of the bank since its early days provides an insight to the focus of action but creates also a potential risk on objectivity of this study (see section 3 for discussion on methodology). The bank, its' principles of operation and the interface are introduced in this section.

Via established this web based terminology bank in 2004 to support the work of its interpreter staff and their cooperation with the sign language using customers. It aims to be a dynamic and interactive platform where its users, interpreters in particular but also customers, are expected to actively participate in collecting and commenting the content. The bank has currently 111 registered users (situation in May 2011), most of them professional Sign Language interpreters employed by Via. The bank is a closed system; all users outside Via members or staff are accepted in by bank's administration by application (Via 2009a).

The idea of a term bank take its origin from educational interpreting when regular, more or less designated interpreters need to be substituted. With the help of a term bank it is possible to share terminological expertise in specialized fields adopted by individuals with a wider pool of interpreters. This can also affect the specialized terminology to spread and evolve in other, similar contexts. By helping the working interpreters to familiarize with existing specialized terminology Via aims at delivering better quality interpreting (Via 2009a). Recording and cultivating terminology that is not yet established is also intended to increase language awareness among people using and working with Finnish Sign Language.

Via terminology bank holds nearly 3000 entries, each consisting of:

- a video; the term in FinSL
- the term in Finnish
- definition of the concept in Finnish

- reference(s) to the definition in Finnish
- notions of, for example, the use of the term, synonyms etc.; optional, in Finnish
- a comment section where users can discuss the term by writing in Finnish.

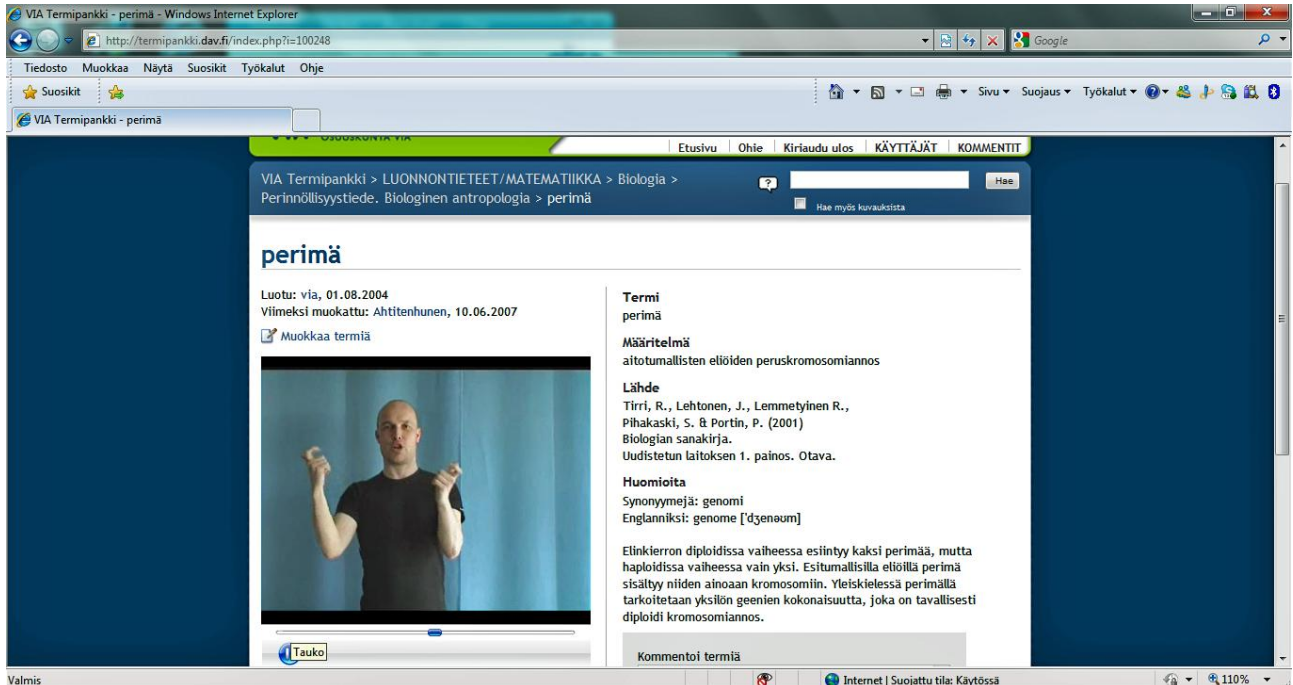


Figure 1: Screenshot of the basic information of an entry in Via term bank.

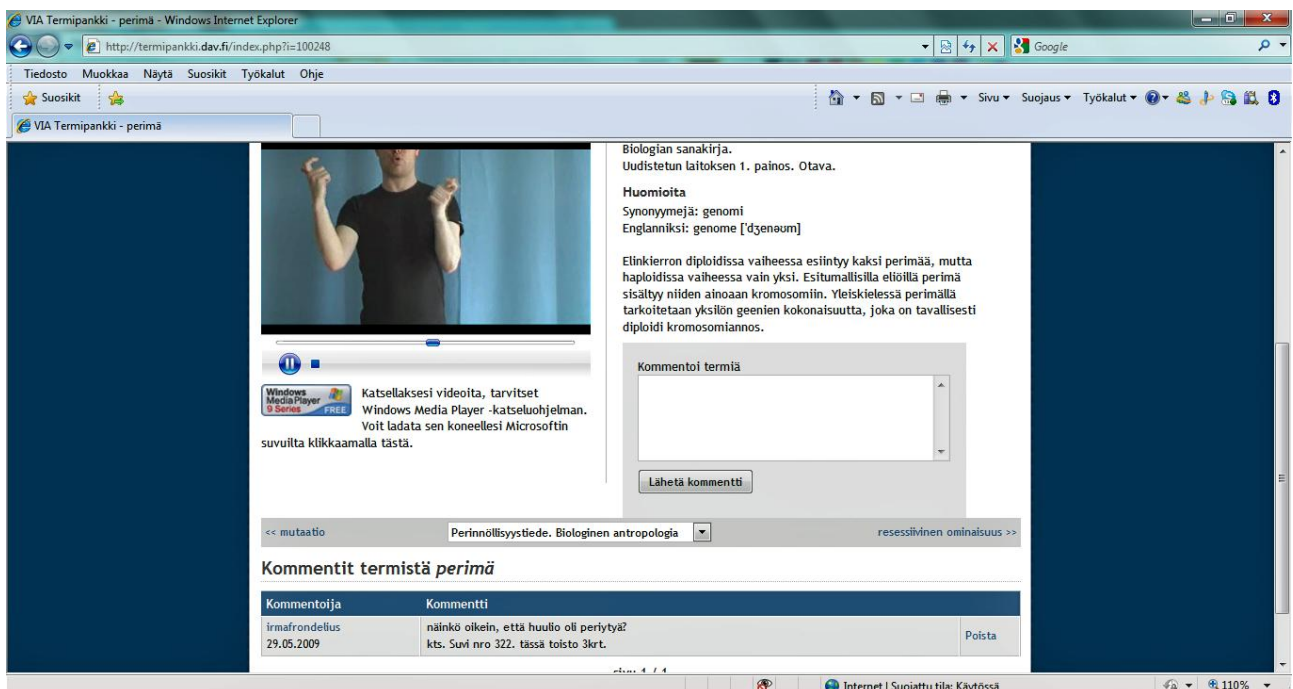


Figure 2: Screenshot of the comment section of an entry in Via term bank.

Generally terminology work can be characterized by focusing on concepts and their relations, whereas dictionary work examines words and their meanings (The Finnish Terminology Centre TSK 2006). Dictionary work often aims at standardization of a certain language form (Johnston 2003:431, 439 presented by Hoyer 2010:120). The aim of Via's term bank is the opposite: to present variation as a key element of the language and to add awareness of its existence. In terminology work, a concept consists of a number of components (The Finnish Terminology Centre TSK 2006). The relevant and characteristic components are semantically described in a definition (ibid.). Terms are lexical names for the concepts that help to concisely refer to the complete meaning of the concept, provided that it is known (ibid.).

In Via term bank, terms are classified into categories and the user can either search for them through the categories or separately by a search tool (in Finnish). The database also includes synonyms for some terms in FinSL, i.e. there can be several entries by the same name, numbered in order or their production to the bank. Via's terminology bank seeks to be a somewhat ontological system, consisting of terms from all possible specialized fields, as well as variation to already established terminology. Notably the term bank does not recommend or prioritize the content; it merely offers it to the exposal of the users (Via 2009B).

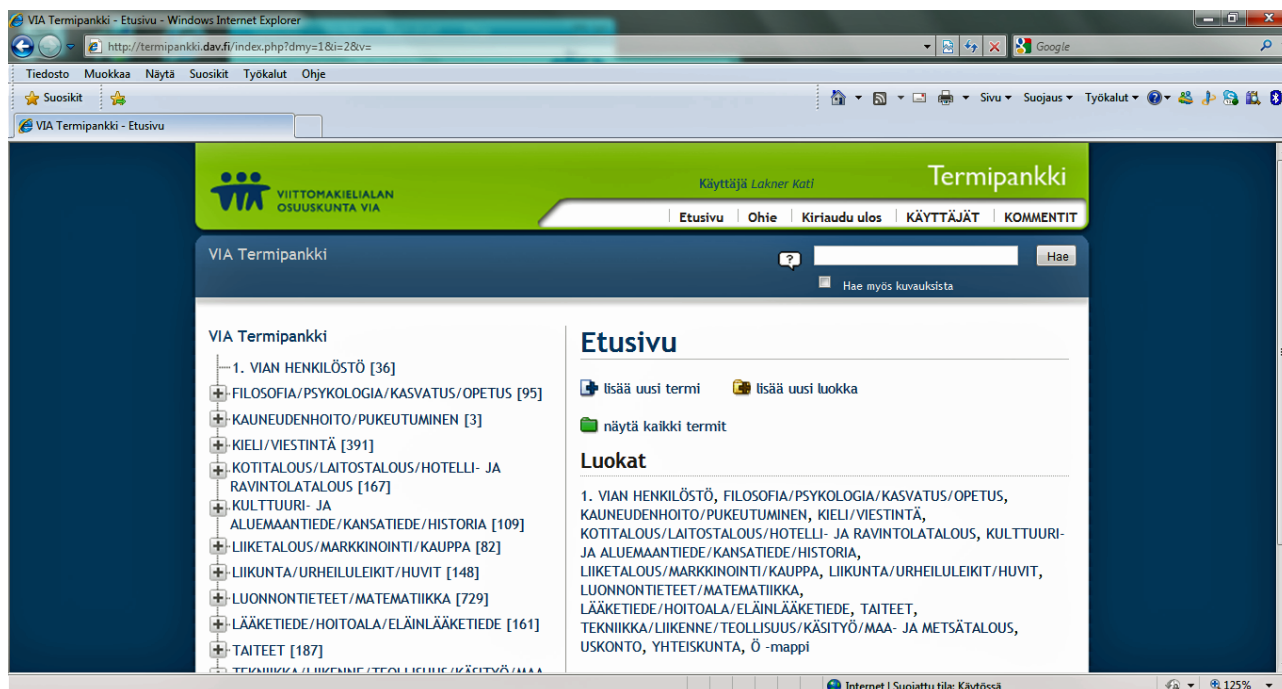


Figure 3. Screenshot of the classification system in Via term bank.

The content of the bank has been collected and produced collectively by the bank users, including cooperation partners from interpreting teams of other companies and the Sign Language

translation team of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. The guidelines for collecting terms for the term bank (Via 2009b) require that all terms have the written data concerning the terms, i.e. definition, references and possible synonyms, prior to videoing the signs. This is to make sure that all necessary information can be added to the bank at the same time. Experience has shown that finding and formulating the definitions from reliable sources is the most industrious part of the process. It takes time to learn a routine for this so it is worthwhile to work with at least a few dozens of terms at a time. With new terminology that has developed in interpreting, the users are encouraged to take enough time to test them in several interpreting situations and process them with colleagues and customers. The employees have the possibility to do terminology work within their working hours by individual agreement with the employer (ibid.).

Via term bank has been in use for over seven years. Until now there haven't been any studies as to how it is being used, or how usable it is. The term bank is being constantly updated and maintained by a group of administrators. The user registry provides statistics of login frequency of individuals, but a more specific description of the type and quality of use was needed to see if the tool is fulfilling its purpose.

#### **1.4 The focus of this study**

The previous sections present the background information for this particular study, including a discussion of the need for interpreters to develop their awareness of the developing lexicon of FinSL, the current state of the limited set of tools available for that purpose, and an examination of the Via term bank as an exploratory method for terminology work.

When new fields of study are entered and higher positions conquered through interpreting, new vocabulary is often created in a partnership between the interpreter and the deaf student or professional. Participation in a dynamic cooperative process results in creation of tacit knowledge and enhances the linguistic awareness of interpreters. This paper discusses the possibility of collecting the fruits of these situations, in other words, the evolving terminology, and recognising of lexical variation, and sharing this information with other interpreters so as to drive professional development both individually and collectively. The exposure to potentially interesting lexical variations and new terminology increases metalinguistic awareness and the opportunity to discuss these phenomena increases it even further.

While the term bank introduced in this paper presents only the outcomes of cooperation with deaf customers, it is important to consider the cooperative process itself. Encouraging interpreters

to carry out practical terminology work with deaf people and with other interpreters encourages the ability to be proactive in developing professional skills, a proposal offered also by Laurie Swabey and Paula Mickelson (2008:68).

This type of cooperative activity can also be linked to the contentions of Graham Turner (2007:181-183), the co-production of the interpreting process and the empowerment of stakeholders in an interpreting situation. Turner states: “[...] it is a legitimate part of the interpreter’s professionalism to seek to bring PPs [primary participants] to an overt and active appreciation of the interpretative work – the fine-grained semantic, pragmatic and discursal navigation and management – in which the practitioner is engaged”. In the preface of the Language Policy for Sign Languages of Finland (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010), Markku Jokinen, the Executive Director of the Finnish Deaf Association, warns of the risk of deaf people losing ownership of and decision making concerning FinSL. At the same time Jokinen admits that sharing responsibility with partners is vital for successfully sustaining and developing Finnish Sign Language.

Inspired by these ideas I set out to explore on one hand, **how a tool such as the term bank as exemplified by Via can enhance the professional development of interpreters**, and on the other hand, **what role terminology work carried out by interpreters plays in relation to language policy of a minority language such as FinSL?**

## 2 Theoretical frameworks

This section introduces the theoretical frameworks chosen for this study looking at the terminology work done by interpreters from two different viewpoints.

First, I will look at this type of terminology work as a means of individual linguistic competence development of SLIs. A concept of *metalinguistic awareness* is introduced and its applicability as a part of SLIs’ language learning process is evaluated. Also, the development requirements and possibilities at Via Sign Language Sector Cooperative are introduced.

As a second theoretical framework, I will look at terminology work as an act of *language policy, management and planning*. The questions concerning linguistic development, variation and freedom of expression in the chosen variation of a minority language through interpreting, call for further exploration of existing language policy and terminology work as an act of that policy.

## 2.1 Linguistic competence development of sign language interpreters

This section focuses on how developing linguistic competence is a crucial part of SLIs' professional development in general and at Via especially. As already mentioned in 1.1, the majority of interpreters are not bilingual in their working languages when they enter the training. In fact, majority of interpreter students start learning sign language only in the training, meaning they graduate with very basic language skills. Still, they are required to work in a huge variety of settings and also fields of specialized language. This means they are to develop their language skills while gathering their working experience.

All interpreters are naturally exposed to variation and new terminology in the languages they work with, but Finnish SLIs have very little opportunity to check, revise or discuss their knowledge of these features in FinSL (as described in 1.2), which would be crucial for their learning process. Evidently there are similar practices of terminology work in other countries and among spoken language interpreters and their training. Jane Straker (2007) introduces an example of teaching terminology work and glossary production for spoken language public service interpreters. She states that learning to define and categorize, probe and enquire for terminology, eventually leads to interpret more competently. She lists some benefits of learning and practicing glossary production: achieving a glossary of practical use in everyday interpreting, maximizing effort by sharing the fruits of their work with colleagues and preparing the interpreters' minds to be more enquiring, among others (ibid.).

Although this paper discusses the situation in Finland, where the profession of the sign language interpreter has been and still is strongly evolving on its way to become a true profession (see Vatanen, 1996 and La Cross 2000 for analyses and comments of the status of the profession in Finland), the results are easily comparable to interpreters in other countries as well. The following sections present some views to terminology work as a means of developing linguistic competence as well as the specific requirements for professional development set by Via as a leading employer of SLIs in Finland.

### 2.1.1 Metalinguistic awareness

This section discusses the possibilities for SLIs to cope with not having the vocabulary needed in increasing number of fields and what helps them to develop their linguistic competence while at the same time working.



Metalinguistic awareness is a term used in describing primarily literacy acquisition of bilingual children (Bialystok 2001; Mora 2001; Koda & Zehler 2008). The theory focuses particularly on the effect literacy skills in the first language have on literacy skills of the second language. Although interpreters are adult language learners and their language learning is not about literacy as such, it offers an interesting theoretical framework for considering linguistic competence development of interpreters, who need to develop their second working language skills as close as possible to that of a bilingual.

According to Ellen Bialystok (2001:127), “metalinguistic awareness implies that attention is actively focused on the domain of knowledge that describes the explicit properties of language.” She uses the term ‘metalinguistic’ as a qualifier for three different entities, each of them carrying specific processing demands: knowledge, ability, and awareness (Bialystok 2001:121-151). Metalinguistic knowledge refers to the abstract principle of language, such as word order and productive morphological patterns. Metalinguistic ability, on the other hand, describes the capacity to use knowledge about language as opposed to the capacity to use language. Metalinguistic awareness implies that attention is actively focused on the knowledge that describes the explicit properties of language (ibid.). Bialystok (2001:127) emphasizes the importance of metalinguistic processing in understanding second-language acquisition by stating that “with these three considerations, metalinguistic is a potentially important concept in explaining the acquisition and use of language. Moreover, it has clear relevance for understanding second-language acquisition.”

Jill Mora (2001) sees the increase of metalinguistic awareness as a continual and simultaneous process of developing linguistic control and cognitive abilities leading to metalinguistic knowledge. She describes the progression in metalinguistic awareness as a four-stage process:

1. *Implicit unarticulated knowledge of language form and function toward*
2. *structured learning experiences and purposeful uses of text toward metalinguistic awareness*
3. *to explicit knowledge of language form and function and the ability to articulate this knowledge*
4. *resulting in increased self-regulatory control over language production and increased use of language in cognitive performance (ibid.).*

The metalinguistic learning process described above is made possible in constant and active contact with language. Interpreters are training their metalinguistic, as well as, linguistic processes in action with the language and in interaction with native language users.

Different researchers in studies of literacy development and bilingualism divide the concept of metalinguistic awareness into different categories. Ellen Bialystok (2001:135-143) discusses word awareness, syntactic awareness and phonological awareness, whereas Li-jen Kuo and Richard Anderson (2008:42-55) employ categories of phonological, semantic, morphological, syntactic, grapho-phonological and grapho-morphological awareness. As these categories have been used in another field, it is likely that metalinguistic awareness as a part of interpreters' professional competence would require a categorization of its own.

The concept of metalinguistic awareness has been used in Sign Language Interpreting Studies to analyze the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and the production of interpreting omissions by Jemina Napier and Roz Barker (2004). Their work focuses on the interpreting production and clearly suggests that metalinguistic awareness has a key role in the competence of interpreters.

*[...]in order to function, interpreters should have highly developed metalinguistic awareness because they must constantly analyze the linguistic structure of the source language, the semantic message presented within that linguistic structure, the message's potential impact, and the equivalents in an alternative linguistic structure that will provide the same message impact to users of the target language. (Napier & Barker 2004:372).*

In the analysis of their study, Napier and Barker found several categories of omissions relating to metalinguistic awareness. For example, the category of conscious intentional omissions specifically connects to metalinguistic awareness of lexical items. In the interviews of this study, one of the participants points out that "her awareness was heightened due to being able to watch the video of herself interpreting" (Napier & Barker 2004:387). This suggests that being able to review produced language from a (video) prompt and to comment on it are helping interpreters in developing metalinguistic awareness.

### **2.1.2 Professional development at Via**

Via Sign Language Cooperative's mission is to have skilled and committed personnel to produce the best possible quality service. It aims at guiding and developing the existing know-how in the field of sign language interpreting and to offering that to the benefit of its customers, to promote their wellbeing and to develop new forms of service to the field. The highest decision making body for the cooperative is the general meeting of the members. They set the aims and objectives for the cooperative and elect the board. Everyday work is carried out in teams of four to seven interpreters. Regional supervisors are responsible for following and providing for the development

of the individual employees as well as the teams. Teams are independently responsible for organizing their work. Team organization supports the mission and puts into practice the aim of the company. (Via 2010:10-11).

Via requires an attitude of continuous professional development from both its members and employees (Via 2010:28). They also name particular measures for this, for instance formal training and job rotation. Learning is inbuilt in the organizational structures of Via; the whole organization develops by providing a framework for the learning of individual interpreters. The general work method at Via expects the individual interpreters to network actively, share their knowledge and expertise with others and develop work methods collectively. The work method of approaching, analyzing, reflecting and systematically solving problems can be described as exploratory learning (ibid.).

There is no general skill level assessment for SLIs in Finland. In 2007 Via started a development project to create a model for assessing interpreting skills. Each employed interpreter gave a recorded sample of their work on video. A working group of senior interpreters and an interpreter trainer screened all material and created a numerical scale (1-5) with description of specific skills to match each level. Each interpreter received detailed feedback given personally with a marking (1-5). The assessment aims at producing effective feedback, thus giving direction to professional development, career planning and further training. The overall objective of the assessment is to enhance the skill level of Via's employees. The assessment tool was originally developed for internal use but due to growing interest from other interpreting agencies, it has become a product sold also outside Via (Via 2010:13-14). According to a study made on the employees' perspective of the assessment tool (Hannola & Partanen 2009), over 80% of interpreters involved in the assessment thought that it helped them to identify their development needs.

The employer sets requirements to interpreters' attitude towards their work as well as their professional performance. The above mentioned development policy, interpreting skills assessment and establishing the term bank are realization of these requirements; a framework for improving professional competence. Using the term bank requires advanced skills in Finnish Sign Language and an analytical attitude (Via 2010:38). This study seeks to find out whether the employees use the term bank accordingly and whether they consider it as a suitable tool for developing their professional skills. To investigate these questions, the administration of the term bank requested the author for a survey to be carried out within the current users of the bank.

## 2.2 Language policy, management and planning

This paragraph looks at language policy, which relevance to this study is highlighted by involving a minority language. Timothy Reagan (2010:184) makes an excellent remark on why this is so:

*Matters of language and power are inextricably linked. Language policies can serve oppressive and linguistic ends, they can serve progressive and liberating ones, or they can accomplish anything in between. In most contexts and settings, language policy functions in a complex manner that achieves both good things and less good things, and this is the case with respect to sign languages as well. At the heart of questions of whether particular language policies and practices are progressive or regressive much of the time is the actual process by which they are created and implemented.*

Relevant theories by Bernard Spolsky (2004, 2009) concerning language policies in general, as well as by Timothy Reagan (2010) concerning American Sign Language (ASL) in particular are introduced and connected to the focus of this study. Also, a view is given to the current recommendations and statements concerning the linguistic rights of FinSL users and their relation to interpreting provision in the Language Policy for Sign Languages of Finland (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010).

Bernard Spolsky (2009) sees the aim of language policy to account for the choices made by individual speakers based on rule-governed patterns that are recognized by the speech community. Spolsky prefers to speak about 'management' instead of 'planning' as to better illustrate the nature of the phenomenon; as 'planning' reflects a top-down attempt to solve language problems, 'management' accounts for language choices on the basis of internal forces, deriving from language practices (ibid.). Management presupposes a manager, an active agent, who's conscious and explicit efforts seek to affect language choices, may those efforts be successful or not (ibid.). This definition is considered apt for the study at hand for viewing a conscious language practice of interpreters.

Spolsky (2009:2-3) sees language policy as a social phenomenon depending on the beliefs and consensual behaviours of members of a speech community. Traditionally in sociolinguistics, speech community has been distinguished as a language community; all those who speak a specific variety of language, who share a communication network, agreeing more or less on the appropriateness of the use of the multiple varieties used in that community. Calling for a more defined organizational unit, Spolsky uses the notion of domain, introduced originally by Fishman (1972) in

sociolinguistics. Fishman (1972) distinguishes three characteristics of a domain: participants (in their social roles and relationships), location (for example 'home' or 'workplace') and selection of topic (what it is appropriate to talk about in the domain). Spolsky (2009:3) widens the selection of topic to include also communicative function; what is the reason for speaking or writing. Interpreting can be seen to cover several domains, with varying components of participants, location and selection of topic or it can be seen as an overlapping domain of its own, as is the case in Language Policy for Sign Languages of Finland (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010).

Spolsky (2009:246) discusses interpreting as "first aid language management" dealing with immediate problems while waiting for longer-term language management to be effective. This may be the case for many spoken languages as the users of interpreting services can be expected to eventually learn a new language and to manage without interpreting. For sign languages, however, this is not the case and the need for interpreting services cannot be seen to diminish as long as there are deaf people.

Spolsky (2004) states that language policy has three interrelated but independently describable components: practice, beliefs and management. Language practices he calls what people actually do with the language; which features or varieties they choose to use. These practices also provide the regular and predictable linguistic context for, for example, learning a language. Beliefs, or ideology, about a language are important in language policy as they guide choosing the used language or its variety and reflect the values or statuses assigned to them (Spolsky 2004:1-15).

Language management, as used instead of language planning (Spolsky 2009:4), is an explicit and observable effort by someone or some group that has or claims authority over the participants in the domain to modify their practices or beliefs. In this study I am discussing terminology work as language management; a group of interpreters bringing into attention of each other and their clients the variation of existing and possibly new terminology.

As we have seen earlier in this section, language planning is a somewhat parallel concept to language management. Timothy Reagan (2010:51) notes that language planning is traditionally divided into three categories: status planning, corpus planning and acquisition planning. The focus of terminology work naturally falls under the category of corpus planning but in addition Reagan introduces a fourth category of language planning: attitude planning. Attitude planning refers to efforts that aim "to change or alter the attitudes of individuals or groups either toward a particular

language (their own or that of someone else), or toward monolingualism, bilingualism, or multilingualism” (Reagan 2010:51). Reagan presents only very general adaptations to ASL, i.e. efforts to affect some general beliefs concerning signing and signed languages. I propose that working with developing corpus, operating and analyzing the working languages within terminology work thus enhancing the participants’ metalinguistic awareness can be seen as attitude planning.

Corpus planning as an aspect of language planning is primarily linguistic and hence internal to language (Kaplan & Baldauf 1997 in Reagan 2010:162). Reagan defines vocabulary expansion and the preparation of language material, among others, as aspects of corpus planning. He discusses various different forms of lexical creation and expansion: compounding of existing signs, borrowing from both signed and spoken languages and morphological processes (Reagan 2010:162-164).

Corpus planning serves several, sometimes overlapping functions. This work links to lexical modernization which “takes place as efforts are made to increase a language’s lexicon to allow it to deal with new technological, political, economic, educational and social developments and concepts.” (Reagan 2010:73). Timothy Reagan continues by discussing the situation when new concepts come into use in society more quickly than natural development of the language can accommodate, and names these as lexical gaps (ibid.).

Establishing an amateur terminology bank is not directly a controlled attempt to expand the language’s lexicon in a systematic manner, as Reagan (2010) requires of lexical modernization. Bringing forward proposals for new terminology may have a similar effect, or rather, be described as implementing tentative speed-codification of terminology. Notably the term bank collects and presents already existing terminology; inventing or creating new terminology for the term bank is prohibited. Reagan also (2010:76) sees that technological innovations can impact the preservation of smaller languages and also encourage a democratization of the language planning process.

Bernard Spolsky (2004:35-36) discusses the rationale for developing new lexicon as occurring in socio-cultural contexts where modernization contrasts with tradition causing tension between what is imported and the indigenous. He explains that “what is generally wanted in developing societies is not just an adequate terminology, but one that is identified also with the society” (ibid.).

‘The society’ in the case of FinSL is the users of the language; primarily native, but also those who acquire it later in life, such as interpreters (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010:9). A language management process relating to

modernization in sign language, as described earlier in 1.4, often involves both native users and interpreters. The model of terminology work presented in this paper suggests that when the need for new terminology is shared, the process of language management should also be shared in close cooperation with the language community.

As already presented in 1.2, several sign glossaries and lexicons have been produced of Finnish Sign Language. They are usually created on the basis of spoken and written language, i.e. word lists each represented with an equivalent sign. The Language Policy of Finnish Sign Languages (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010:63-64), claims that an unintended result of these may be that FinSL is seen as a simple and limited language. At the same time the policy recognizes the need for ongoing dictionary work; sign lexicon expands and evolves continuously as sign language users are, for example, able to study new fields according to their interest and abilities due to the provision of interpreting services (*ibid.*).

Päivi Rainò (2010:139-155) presents a strong objection to non-lexicographers producing glossaries and dictionaries; by her distinction this is exploitation of the language and can be called linguistic feudalism. She establishes her claim on the reductive nature of such glossaries and dictionaries as they often present only a minimal portion of the existing lexicon as well as altogether fail to describe the features of FinSL to its full potential (*ibid.*). Describing and choosing lexicon in such a tool on the basis of their equivalents in a spoken or written language is, in her mind, leading their users astray. In addition, it reflects an attitude of arbitrary language management and it is underestimating the structures of the language (Rainò 2010:153). Rainò (2010:148) warns of the possible causal risks when a non-native user of such a tool, for example a sign language interpreter, takes the content of the glossary as representing a true linguistic expression of natural FinSL discourse.

## 2.3 Summary of frameworks

The theoretical frameworks of metalinguistic awareness as well as language policy, management and planning, draw from the traditions of socio- and psycholinguistic research. They are used in this study as platforms to view the possible implications of the terminology work carried out by interpreters.

We have seen in section 2.1.1 that research on the acquisition and use of language as well as interpreting omissions of SLIs indicate that metalinguistic awareness plays a key role in interpreters' linguistic competence. There are no suggestions in the literature how interpreters

can further develop this competence beyond the formal interpreting training. This study explores whether terminology work carried out by interpreters, resulting in an online term bank, can be a useful way of developing interpreters' metalinguistic awareness.

At the same time it is acknowledged that such terminology work needs to be aware of its implications towards the minority language involved and that the work should adhere to existing language policy. The Language Policy for Finnish Sign Languages (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010) is used as a guiding document in this study. It mentions interpreting services as a means of fulfilling the linguistic rights of deaf people in different domains. Thus it draws a clear picture of several expectations set for SLIs' professional performance. The argument of this study is that terminology work carried out by interpreters is an act of language management and can be one way of responding to those expectations. It is a conscious effort to analyze and learn more about the interpreters' working languages facilitate their development in new fields and improve the interpreters' linguistic competence to provide better quality service.

Theory of language policy and management is viewed to identify the general framework for the activity described in this study. Developing terminology is seen as an act of language management, as corpus planning, to accommodate the appearance of, for example, lexical gaps. While acknowledging the fact that the process studied here is driven mainly by interpreters, typically non-native language users, and the possible risks this fact poses to the language and its users, this study seeks to present terminology work as a collaborative activity encouraging democratization of the language management process.

Via Sign Language Sector Cooperative has taken an active role in providing its staff and members with an online term bank. There is no previous data on how much and in what ways the term bank is being currently used and whether the users see it as a practical tool for enhancing their professional development. This is being investigated in an online survey for the current users of the bank and the results are analyzed through the two theoretical frameworks. Thus, this study introduces a new view to the possibilities of professional development for working interpreters and their active participation in language management of their working languages.

### **3 Methodology**

This section introduces the methodological design used for this study. To be able to evaluate the possible benefits of the term bank as a professional development tool, or the role of this activity



on language policy and management, preliminary data of the current use of the term bank is needed. Thus a non-experimental fixed design in the form of a survey was chosen.

As Colin Robson (2011:124) suggests, “non-experimental fixed designs are commonly used for descriptive purpose. -- They can be used when the interest is in explaining or understanding a phenomenon”. The advantage of fixed designs is that instead of looking at individual differences they help in identifying patterns and processes which then can be linked to social structures and organizational features (Robson 2011:83).

Traditionally, a fixed design detaches the researcher from having an effect on the findings (Robson 2011:83). In this study the researcher does have a strong personal involvement with the examined subject as I have worked in the administration of the tool since its early days. This may be seen to affect the responses to some extent, possibly resulting in reduced criticism from the respondents. To address this problem, the respondents were invited to present their views anonymously.

This study seeks to be pragmatic in its approach. Pragmatism is demonstrated here by describing the reality, interpreters’ use of a tool, and viewing it through two lenses to gain better understanding of how this activity affects its social surroundings. The data for this study is collected by using surveys, embedding both qualitative and quantitative elements.

### **3.1 Research design**

This section focuses on introducing the design of this particular study: survey and analyzing of the data in the light of the theories. First, a pilot study on the usability of the term bank is carried out, followed by an online survey on the usage of the bank for the current users.

The pilot study on usability was undertaken to bring forward any possible usability problems that might hinder the functionality of the term bank prior to studying its use more extensively. Notably, the term bank’s usability had not been assessed since its establishment in 2004.

#### **3.1.1 Pilot study on usability**

A pilot study on the usability of Via term bank was carried out in December 2010. It aimed to review the bank’s usability through a heuristic evaluation following Jakob Nielsen’s Ten Usability Heuristics (Nielsen 2002).

In the pilot study four experienced users of online information retrieval systems (none of which a current user of Via term bank) tested the term bank for one hour within a period of one week and filled in a template (Appendix I) with questions concerning the usability of the bank;

navigation, accessibility and consistency of the system, altogether ten indicators. Two of the experts had a long experience using different information retrieval systems through their profession as news journalists and media trainers. They were not familiar with the bank prior to the pilot and they were not knowledgeable of any sign language. The other two experts were comparable with the regular users of Via term bank, i.e. sign language interpreters. Both of them had earlier been using the term bank but neither were current users. One of the interpreters was also a deaf native signer.

The results from the pilot study demonstrated that the majority of usability indicators (eight out of ten) were evaluated to be functioning either fully or at least partly by all experts. It generated practical suggestions for improvement in particular on navigation, functionality, user control, online help and consistency of the bank's content. All of these issues have since been taken into account by the administration of the term bank and some technical improvements are under construction. It was necessary, however, not to implement any major changes in the interface prior to the survey on the users to avoid affecting the users' experience of the bank significantly, thus affecting their responses.

### 3.1.2 Online survey for users

An online survey was chosen as the method of collecting data from the current users of the term bank. As Via is operating throughout Finland, it was the only democratic way of reaching all users within the limited time available to carry out this study. It was also important that the informants are able to remain anonymous; as the majority of the respondents are employees of Via and the investigation concerns their use of a tool provided by their employer, there could be doubt that the employer would recognize individuals from identifiable data.

Before implementing the actual online survey, the questionnaire was piloted on eight (8) informants of the target group, consisting of Via regional supervisors, CEO and the administration group of the term bank. An online survey was then created as an anonymous internet questionnaire, consisting of a total of 25 questions. The survey was run in the period of two weeks in May 2011. The sample of the survey was collected from the user registry of the term bank; a total of 111 current users were identified, 106 of which internal users (i.e. Via members or employees) and five external users (interpreting service users, co-operation partners or interpreter trainees). Excluding the eight people who had already participated in the pilot, the survey sample consists of a total of 103 participants.

To reach Via members and employees there were comprehensive mailing lists available from the company's administration. The e-mail addresses of the five external users were added to the list of recipients and a link to the questionnaire along with a request to participate in this study was emailed to the participants. Despite the small number of external users, they were included in the survey wanting to bring to the surface their possibly contrasting views.

There were 40 responses received within the given time, only one representing the external users. This was decided to be filtered out as a single response could not be taken as representative of the whole group. Thus the response rate results in 37,9% (N=39). The questions (Appendix 2) can be divided into four categories: general questions concerning the respondents' background (questions 1-6), questions concerning their use of the term bank (questions 7-12), questions concerning professional development and the bank as a tool (questions 13-21) and questions concerning the general role of the term bank in the field (questions 22-25). The results are presented respectively in section 4.1.

### **3.2 Validity, generalizability and limitations**

There are some typical threats to internal validity of a fixed design research (Robson 2011:88-89), which are discussed in this section to demonstrate the validity of this study. Also, issues of external validity of the study, or generalizability as Colin Robson (2011:91) discusses, and some limitations to this particular study are outlined.

As explained earlier in 3.1.1, it was seen important that no major changes were made to the term bank prior to the user survey. The general conditions for using the term bank, such as availability of computers and internet to Via employees, remained unchanged during the time of the survey. A pre-information of the coming survey was published in the internal information newsletter of Via in mid April and an invitation to the survey was sent out a month later once the survey was opened on internet. The timing of the survey, late spring, is perhaps not optimal, due to normal exhaustion after a possibly stressful period of work and anticipation for upcoming holidays. Still, a high degree of involvement and commitment towards developing the term bank can be expected of the respondents; it is a tool created by and for them. Responding to the survey was also presented as a part of regular work task of Via employees.

Participation in a pre-test is considered possibly affecting results in fixed design research (Robson 2011). In this case there was no pre-test as such for the participants but instead a pilot was carried

out. The participants of the pilot were, however, excluded from the final survey, as were the participants of the pilot study on usability.

Piloting is categorically suggested, if at all possible, for all kinds of studies (Robson 2011, Punch 2003). This proved to be useful in fine-tuning the questionnaire, thus improving its reliability. The pilot results showed no indication of clear ambiguity of the questions. In the course of piloting the online questionnaire one of the questions was unintentionally left out but once noticed, added to the final questionnaire and all questions were double-checked to make sure none of them were missing from the final version. One (out of total of eight) pilot respondents commented the length of the questionnaire by stating that the questions were easy to answer and it took less than 15 minutes to finalize the questionnaire with thought. Two more questions, one open ended and one multiple choice question, were added in the final questionnaire which was seen to still keep the length of the questionnaire reasonable.

The generalizability of the results in the light of the selection of participants of this study is a noteworthy issue. The activity this study focuses on is by far systematically in use only at Via. Also, the general work method at Via, as explained in section 2.1.2, can also be restricted to apply to Via members and employees, all of whom were invited to participate in the survey. The response rate (37,9%) of this study was lower than expected but the data is representative of Via employees (see 4.1.1 for comparison of Via employees' and the respondents' professional background). It is assumed that not all employees use the term bank regularly; thus they would not be prioritizing responding to a survey concerning it. In the light of these conclusions it is obvious that the results of this study represent the behaviour of Via employees. Overall it can be stated that possible threats to validity and generalizability, such as changes in the research setting, selection of sample or period of study, were excluded.

The chosen method, as well as the scope and time available for this study, set some limits to what kind of data could be collected. Small-scale surveys are typically used to find out relationships between variables (Punch 2003). This study uses a survey to elicit the attitudes and reasons for certain action by looking at the reported use of the term bank through the lenses of theories in professional development and language policy and management. A particular challenge lies in designing the survey questions so that they actually prompt real life situations of using the bank but not predict in a too restricting manner the kind of use there might be. Thus, most of the descriptive questions concerning the use of the term bank are followed by an open ended question to give room for the respondents' definitions of their activity, as well as their

expectations concerning the development of the tool. A compilation of the results as well as a discussion of them is presented in the following section.

## **4 Results & discussion**

This section presents the results from the user survey divided into four categories. It discusses the significance of the results on the SLI's linguistic competence development and views the implications of SLIs' participation in language management and the implementation of the language policy of FinSL.

### **4.1 Results from the online survey**

A total of 103 participants were invited to the survey, 40 of whom responded within the given period of two weeks. It appeared that only one of the five external users of the term bank had responded. As a single response cannot be seen as representative of the whole group, their response was filtered out, resulting in the final sample of 39 persons (N=39, 37,9% of the whole sample).

The questions were grouped into four sequential categories for organizational reasons. In the actual survey the categories were not shown to respondents. The results are presented below in respective sections. First section includes responses to questions concerning the respondents' background (questions 1-6), second responses to questions concerning their use of the term bank (7-12), third responses to questions concerning professional development and the role of the bank as a tool (13-21) and fourth responses to questions concerning the general role of the term bank in the field (22-25).

#### **4.1.1 Respondents' background**

To get an overview of the respondent's experience in the field, they were asked to identify their length of experience with FinSL as well as their length of experience as graduated SLI. They were also asked of the length of their experience and of their employment status at Via; this information may help in identifying the specific needs of different employees in more detail if later requested by Via. All respondents were also asked whether or not they have participated in producing material for the term bank. In the complete questionnaire there were specific categories for the external users concerning their background but as they were excluded from the final data, these categories are not included in this presentation either.

Majority of respondents (56%) have experience with sign language between five to ten years and none of them reported to be a native FinSL user, as indicated below (figure 4).

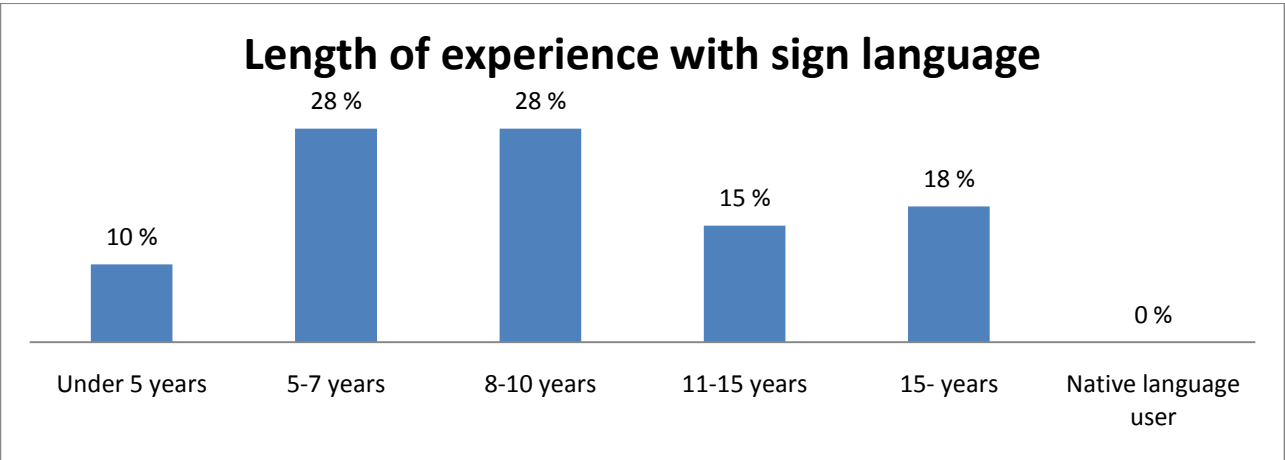


Figure 4: Respondents' length of experience with sign language.

Responses concerning the length of experience as graduated SLI follow a similar pattern. For the most part they also match the statistics of employees of Via (figure 5) (Huusko 2011). The only significant difference in representation in the survey results and statistics of Via employees is in the category of 6-10 years of experience; employees in this category are not fully represented in the survey results due to their lower response rate. It can be seen, however, that the results of this study considerably represent the situation within Via in general.

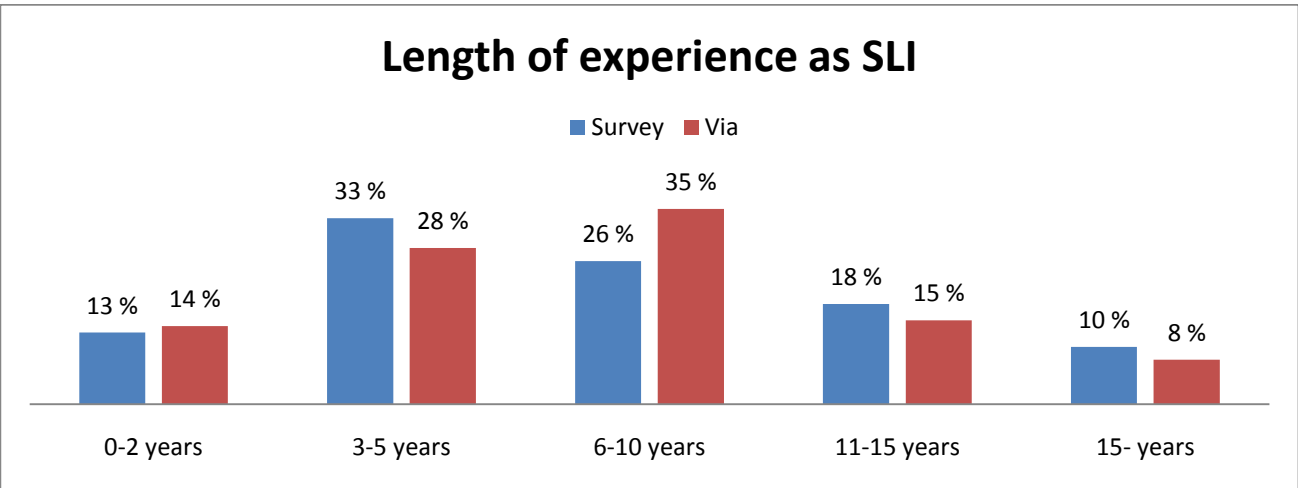


Figure 5: Respondents' length of experience as SLI reported in this survey and by Via.

These results suggest that the majority of respondents are still reasonably fresh language learners, considering they probably have spent their first three to four years of learning the language in

interpreter training. Majority (24) of them reported not having participated in producing material for the term bank.

#### 4.1.2 Use of the term bank

Next category of questions (7-12) focused on the respondents' use of the term bank. First they were inquired of the frequency of visiting the term bank. The options here were 'almost daily', 'weekly', 'a few times per month', 'a few times per year', 'less than every year' or 'never'. 62% of the term bank users visit the bank only a few times per year and 28% monthly. None of them indicated to visit the bank daily or that they have never visited it. A common visit to the bank lasts from 15 to 30 minutes as reported by 59% of the respondents.

At this point it turned out that there were two respondents who presumably had visited the bank but decided not to use it; they repeatedly responded to the remaining questions that they do not use the term bank. Interestingly though, when given the option of marking more than one option to specify their use of the bank, one of them sometimes did mark these along with 'I don't use term bank'. Their responses to the open ended questions later imply that they do not use sign language very much in their current positions, i.e. they probably work more within management.

Those who did report using it were inquired in more detail of the incident and their motivation. The respondents were asked to mark all suitable options, as presented in figure 6. The resulting set of percentages therefore totals more than 100%. For example, 44% reports to use the term bank after an assignment to revise terminology, but many of these will have used it also prior to an assignment.

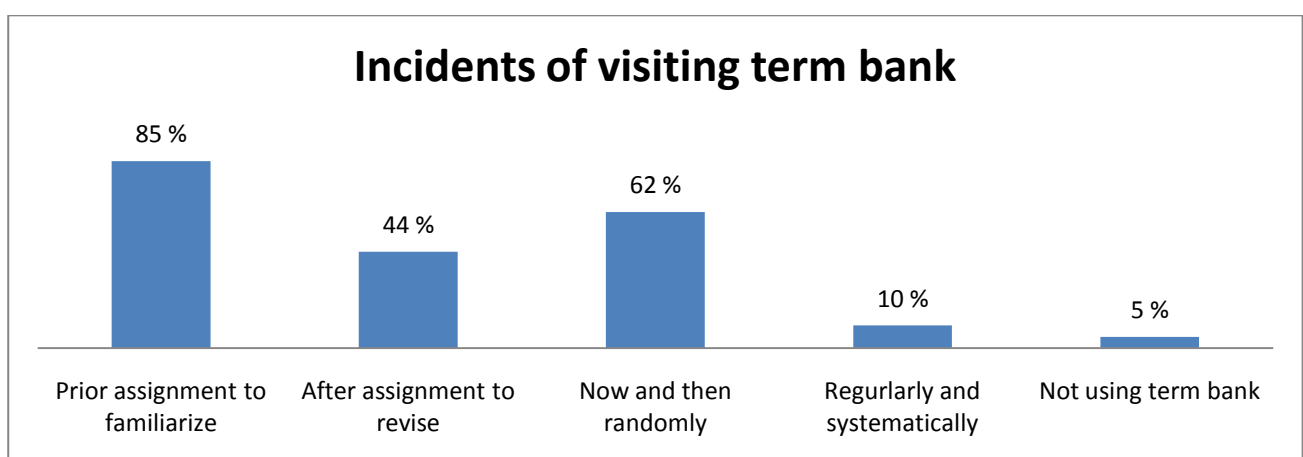


Figure 6: Responses concerning the incidents of visiting the term bank.

These responses indicate that the term bank is mainly used purposefully for learning; either prior or right after an assignment. It also clearly offers a platform for more general and incidental revision of terminology.

When requested to further elicit their use, ten users identified incidences for using the term bank, such as “instructing interpreter trainees to use it” (three comments), “checking a particular sign or a feature or form of a sign that I otherwise already know” (two comments), “searching for variants of a particular sign”, “familiarizing and preparing for a new field in educational interpreting” and “purely out of curiosity, to learn something new”. These responses draw a picture of quite diverse use of the tool for lexical learning, focusing on anything from individual signs and their features to embracing whole new fields.

Next question inquired the ways in which the bank was being used. The most common practice was to look for terms in particular fields through their categories (87%). Many of the users also look for terms through the search option (69%) or flick through the categories and their content randomly (62%). The content of the bank is also discussed with either colleagues and/or customers by 31% of the users. 23 % of them reported they search for comments on the terms and 13% also comment themselves.

When asked to add if there was any other kind of use, the responses (three altogether) were “I revise my perception of concepts and correct any errors”, “if a term has been commented on, I consider the term in the light of the comments” and “I explore the way the terms are classified”. These responses indicate that the use of the term bank is generally systematic and emphasizes viewing and reviewing rather than actively commenting the content.

#### **4.1.3 The term bank as a tool for professional development**

The third set of questions (13-21) focused on the role of the term bank as a professional development tool. This started by asking the respondents to identify which skills they consider exercising by using the term bank, allowing them to mark all relevant options (as with figure 6). The results are presented below in figure 7.



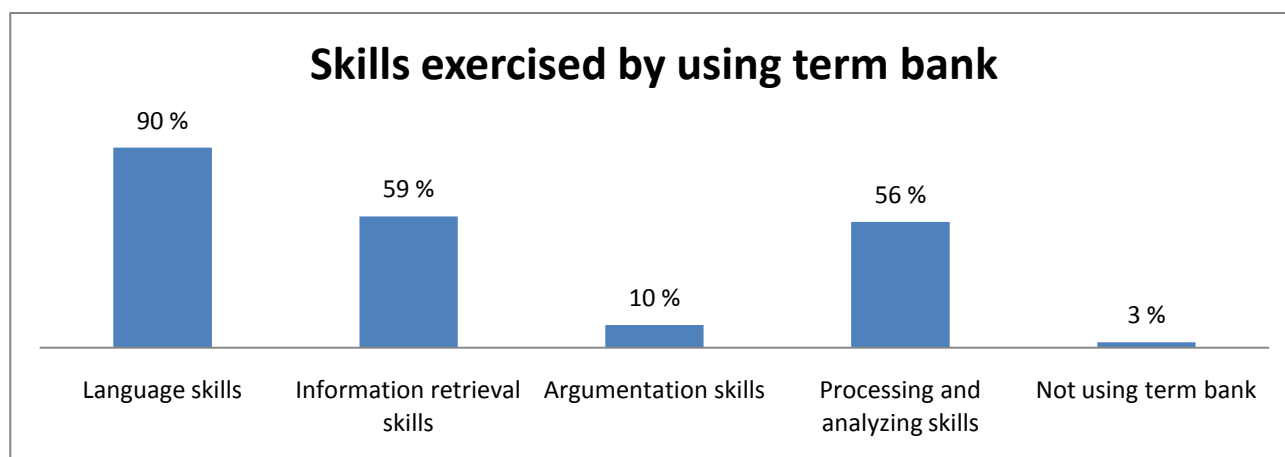


Figure 7: Responses concerning the skills the users exercise by using the term bank.

When given the opportunity to comment or elicit the exercised skills, a total of five responses covered “skill to comment” (which was implied in the options by ‘argumentation skills’), “skill to view critically, which probably goes under analyzing skills”, “ability to evaluate” and “patience, unfortunately, as it is fairly difficult to find what one is looking for”. One respondent also commented that the definitions of the terms help increase general knowledge. The focus these responses put on language skills is expected due to the nature of the tool. These results suggest, however, that it also encourages the user to learn to retrieve information as well as to process and analyze it.

The users were also asked to identify specific advantages the use of Via term bank offers. The most substantial benefit is the help the term bank provides in preparing lexically for interpreting (87%). It is also seen as a good tool for learning new concepts in FinSL (72%) and Finnish (31%). One third of the respondents consider that using the term bank makes them more aware of their working languages.

When invited to prompt or add to their choices of the advantages, a total of five responses were given. They mentioned that through the term bank it is possible “to disseminate specific information of terminology to colleagues equally, meaning to those who actively use the bank” and “to stimulate fruitful discussion concerning signs and variants in my team”. One respondent commented that “the term bank helps in perceiving the future assignment as an entity and the different issues possibly relating to it”. Some also commented that it is “a good tool to use when I work at the office” and that through using the bank they are able to “see if there are any new signs”. All these responses suggest that the users themselves find the term bank a useful tool in

developing awareness of individual terminology (in both their working languages) as well as their task as interpreters. Importantly, it also influences and increases their interaction with colleagues.

Although the users gain some apparent advantages from using the term bank, at the same time they identify the tool has defects; there are too many terms missing (74%), content is added too slowly (69%), the content is organized confusingly (41%) and it is difficult to use (38%). A request to elicit the experienced defects resulted in an abundance of responses, 20 altogether. They are compiled according to respective themes below.

The categorization system of the terms was criticized the most. Several users found it confusing and too complex to search for terms through categories. A single term existing in several categories added to their confusion. Giving the categories names that would explain their content better was also requested, although this was seen as a challenge considering the wide range of fields to be covered. When not able to find what they were looking for through the categories, several respondents found using the search tool a good option.

The functions of the search tool were also criticized by a few respondents; a long list of search results is difficult to navigate in. There is a link to see the previous or the next term of the search results but no possibility to move more flexibly within the list search results. One respondent proposed a solution of adding an alphabetical list of all terms, although they did also justify the existing categorization; it is similar to what the spoken language glossaries use. Another respondent encapsulated the threat of not finding what a user is looking for: “During my first year or working I visited the term bank and because I was not able find what I was looking for, I was frustrated and now visit it only on rare occasions. I’ve heard that there are thousands of terms in the bank, but they remain beyond my reach.”

There were also miscellaneous critical comments concerning the actual terms. One respondent, quite correctly, complained that “not all signs are suitable to use everywhere”. It is arguable whether this is more a fact than a defect and could perhaps be overcome by users commenting more actively the use of the terms. Another respondent wished there would only be terms that also contain a video (of a sign). More “slang signs”, or special signs used by youth, were requested. A few users criticized the lack of terms in several fields, but only one of them suggested that they would be interested in collecting terms themselves, for example those used specifically in their region.

Two respondents called for more information about new features and material in the bank. Comments by other users concerning the use of the terms and how they have evolved were also anticipated. There was a clear hesitation towards commenting by one respondent: “I have commented on terms myself but sometimes I feel they are too definite and personifying. Would it be possible to comment anonymously?” This may be because of general scarcity of comments. She suggested the supervisors should encourage the use of the term bank and commenting especially.

A few comments were also given on technical issues, such as adding new material and the use of password. Two comments suggested it should be made easier to add new material and that help should be provided particularly for filming the videos. There were also two comments stating that the video clips sometimes download slowly and one suggestion that the clips should play as a loop. Three respondents also find it difficult to sign in the bank using a password which easily gets lost. These users probably didn’t realize that they are able to ask for a new password to be emailed automatically every time they sign in if needed. One common password that everybody would use, as one respondent suggested, is simply not possible in the current system. The use of passwords naturally challenges usability a little but it is necessary to identify users and to increase the overall security of the system.

When asked for any additional needs concerning the bank, there was a suggestion “to include more large-scale material, such as longer signed expressions or signed songs”. It is not clear what was meant with “longer signed expressions” here, but as this respondent also notes, these would be appropriate perhaps in some other tool than a term bank. Another respondent suggested that “it would be good to be able to send questions to term bank administration either in writing or by a video in sign language”. This implies an expectation of authority; to have a body that suggests and recommends certain terminology. As indicated earlier in section 1.3, this would be strictly against the operation philosophy of the bank.

When asked how the use of Via term bank impacts the users’ activity in interpreting and given the opportunity to mark all suitable options (as with figures 6 and 7), the results in figure 8 indicate a clear emphasis on the term banks role as a tool for professional development and stimulating discussion over terminology with customers and colleagues alike. Almost one third of the respondents also affirm that they relate differently to terminology than before using the term bank. Only a very small percentage of respondents consider that they are not affected at all by using the bank.

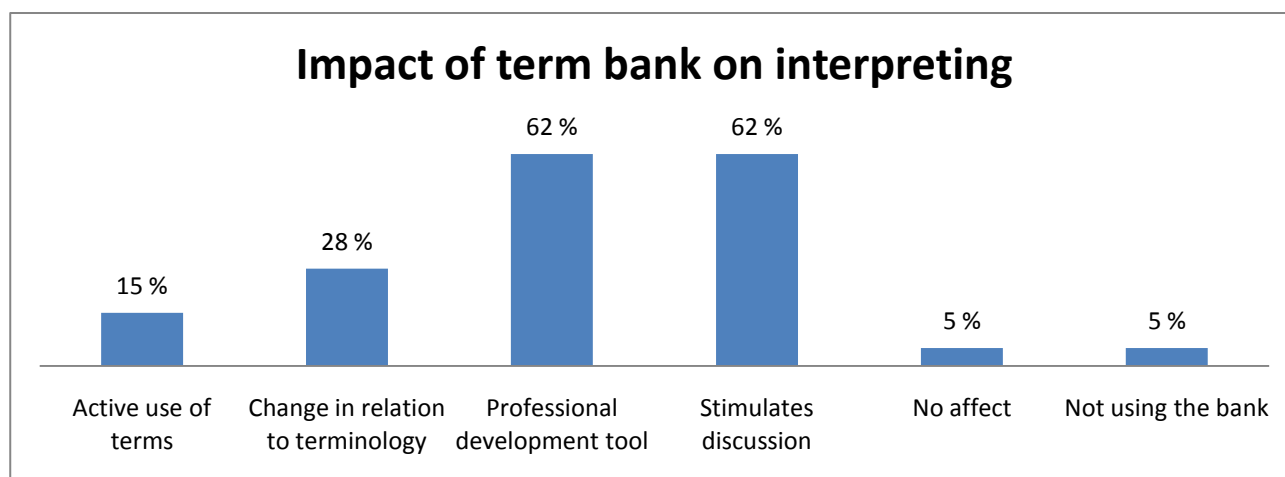


Figure 8: Responses concerning the impact of the term bank on interpreting.

When invited to report how colleagues and customers respond to introducing terminology from the term bank, there was again an abundance of responses, altogether 21. Nine of the responses reported a neutral response; customers and colleagues accept these terms as relevant material for further analyzing or to be used instead of spelling when there is no established term available. Terms from Via term bank are then introduced, critically discussed and if seen appropriate and useful, used accordingly. As one respondent summarized, “The response from others is pragmatic; there’s no need to reinvent the wheel but the term bank is no Bible either.” The users also accept if the terms they introduce are not accepted for further use and show a clear understanding for individual preferences and regional variation of lexicon.

Two of the responses reported not having introduced any material and two a critical or negative reaction towards material from the term bank. One of them related to the lack of terms in the term bank; the terms they would have needed were missing. The other reported that colleagues were more willing to use the material from the term bank but customers wouldn’t usually accept them. Sometimes the user reported that they didn’t originally introduce where they had learned the term, this possibly influencing a more neutral reception.

Eight of the responses reported a positive reaction towards introducing term bank material. Many times it stimulates fruitful discussions with customers and colleagues alike. This in itself can be seen as a positive thing leading to a participatory and democratic terminology development process. Several users reported that the lack of terminology within a specific professional field is a problem for both interpreters and customers and that having at least some starting point is already beneficial. They also commented that customers feel strained by interpreters constantly inquiring for professional terminology in sign language.

#### 4.1.4 General significance of the term bank

The last set of questions (22-25) focused on the users' view of the general role of the term bank in the field of sign language interpreting. Before asking how the users see the general significance of Via term bank in the long run, there was a brief introduction regarding the notion of language policy (see appendix 2). By this introduction the following questions were linked to the Language Policy for Sign Languages of Finland (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010).

The respondents were again presented with five statements to view the term bank and its significance more broadly. When given the opportunity to mark all suitable options (as with figures 6, 7 and 8), the results presented in figure 9 indicate that a strong emphasis was given to the term bank as a tool for interpreters' professional development. It was also seen as a tool for co-operation between interpreters and sign language users, as well as an act in support of the current language policy.

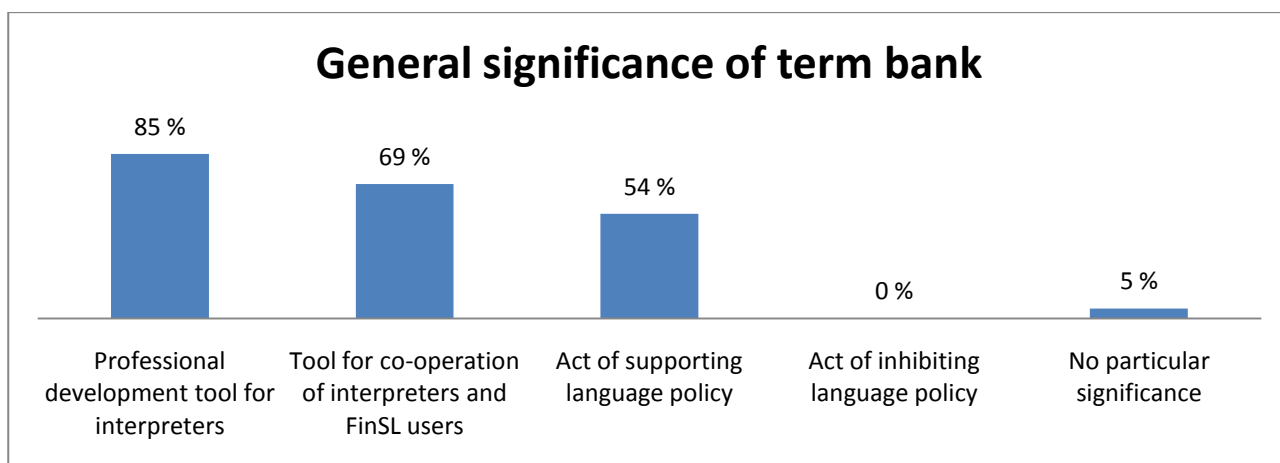


Figure 9: Respondents' view concerning the general significance of the term bank.

When requested to elaborate their responses, a total of 24 respondents shared their opinion, presented here according to their relation to the options in the above figure. Quite a few users commented the bank's significance as a professional development tool. The main concern presented was that it is currently being used by only a small group of interpreters; the administration and the active few who participate in collecting terms. Almost all respondents did, however, emphasize the importance of sharing their knowledge and learning to analyze the presented terminology. These were also seen as key points for improving their professional, specifically linguistic, competence and thus the quality of service for their customers.

Several comments also pointed out the importance of co-operation with customers. Term bank was seen useful in challenging both customers and interpreters to analyze their own language and to work together towards mutual understanding. It was seen to offer alternative ways of perceiving terminology, although it does not always give readymade solutions to terminology problems. Some respondents were not aware that the customers could also access the term bank and those who were, wished to see more customer involvement in the term bank on all levels: producing material, commenting the contents and administering it. There was also a suggestion to involve both deaf and hearing professionals of specific fields in revising the material in the bank. Native users of sign language were, however, seen as the primary co-operation group for SLIs.

Terminology work and the term bank was seen as supporting the language policy, requiring there is increase in the above mentioned co-operation between deaf and hearing, may they be interpreters or customers. Collecting, analyzing and commenting terms as such were seen to be acts of positive language management. There was also skepticism towards the actual impact of this work on the language community or even sign language interpreters in general, as the tool is in use only at Via. One respondent stated that “the official development of the language is so rigid that the term bank is hardly capable of influencing it”. The majority of the respondents did, however, welcome closer co-operation with the language community.

Four comments presented possible threats to language policy by the term bank. The main concern was that interpreters should not take ownership of sign language; they can propose some terms for use but it is the customers who decide which terms they want to be used and this should be respected. At the same time one respondent admitted that the analyzing process of interpreters concerning terminology should not be disregarded either. They suggested that terms should be collected with thorough consideration and marked with some indication of the context and frequency of their use as well as their emergence. A somewhat opposite view was given by another respondent who expected that “native language users are needed in terminology work to agree on signs that could be used in different parts of Finland; this would facilitate the interpreters’ work tremendously”. This individual response indicates a desire for language standardization; something quite opposite to the philosophy of the term bank.

Finally, the users were asked whether they would miss the term bank if it was closed. A clear majority of the respondents (87%) stated they would miss it. Perhaps not surprisingly, 13% stated they would not miss the term bank if it was closed. The motivation for this was already indicated

in some of the previous comments; the users are frustrated by not finding the terms they would need and by the lack of interaction with native language users.

These reasons were also mentioned in the very last open ended question, where the users were invited to give any feedback concerning the survey and the term bank in general. Altogether 20 people responded to this. Eight of the responses associate with the structure of the bank and its usability; possibility to easily view current and especially new content increases motivation to use it. They also wish to be informed more about activities within the term bank, noting that this survey as such encouraged them to start using it again. Presenting more variation of terms and being more tolerant towards variation in the comments were also mentioned as increasing motivation. Definitions of the terms written with clear and understandable language was requested in one comment.

Quite a few of the comments indicated a passive attitude towards terminology work; they would be happy to have a ready-made tool comprehensively presenting lexical variation used in different parts of the country and extensively analyzed and commented by native language users. Not very many comments suggested that a major part of the face value of a tool like this is the effort they themselves as active users put in developing it. Still, there were several respondents who were thankful for and proud of having such a tool available.

## **4.2 Discussion on the results and the theories**

In this section the results of the online user survey are viewed through the theoretical frameworks chosen for this study. The aim here is to answer the research questions, set earlier in section 1.4: how a tool such as the term bank as exemplified by Via can enhance the professional development of interpreters, and what role terminology work carried out by interpreters plays in relation to language policy of a minority language such as FinSL?

The user survey revealed several issues indicating the use of the term bank as a tool for the respondents' professional development. Noticeable is the frequency of use; almost one third (28%) visit the bank monthly whereas a clear majority (62%) use it only a few times per year. This and the responses given concerning the incidents of using the term bank indicate, that it is mainly used purposefully for learning; either prior or right after an assignment. The bank also offers a platform for more general and incidental revision of terminology, emphasizing viewing and reviewing rather than actively commenting the content. Lexical learning taking place covers a vast variety of aims focusing on anything from individual signs and their features to familiarizing with whole new fields.

These findings are in parallel to what research on bilingual language learning by Jill Mora (2001) and Ellen Bialystok (2001) suggest; focusing attention to explicit properties of language launch a learning process of developing linguistic control. The focus the responses put on language skills is expected due to the nature of the tool. The results suggest, however, that using the term bank also encourages the users to learn to retrieve information and specifically to process and analyze terminology. One third of the respondents consider that using the term bank makes them more aware of their working languages.

Further use of the data collected for this study could reveal for example differences in use between interpreters in different stages of their professional career. It is expected that Via as the employer and administrative body of the term bank will be interested in looking at the data in more detail.

The users find the term bank a useful tool in developing awareness of their overall task as interpreters. This demonstrates that using the term bank stimulates learning that focuses particularly on the users' cognitive abilities, which Mora (2001) sees fundamental for leading to increased metalinguistic awareness. Thus, it offers a platform for structured learning experiences, which is also what Mora (2001) point out necessary for the process of increasing metalinguistic awareness. Several respondents commented that the users were often not able to find a term they were looking for. It is apparent, however, that the mere process of searching and analyzing related material is intrinsically enlightening. This suggests that the term bank is more important for developing metalinguistic than linguistic awareness as such.

An important consequence of using the term bank individually is that it influences and increases interaction with colleagues, thus possibly generating a more collective learning process outside the immediate use of the term bank. This involves also stimulating interaction with customers which can be seen as allowing participatory and democratic terminology development process. Several comments of the survey emphasized specifically the importance of co-operation with customers in terminology work, pointing out that it is vital for the future of the term bank to see more customer involvement on all levels: producing material, commenting the contents and administering it.

Involving more native language users to use the term bank presents a clear challenge for future, even more so if they are required to be trained and experienced lexicographers as Päivi Rainò (2010) suggests. Offering the possibility to use the term bank has not led to a flow of native



language users visiting the bank. There could be several reasons for this, although further study on the side of the native users' participation in terminology development processes is needed. Commonly, the need for specialized terminology and the interest towards terminology work arises when entering a new field either through studies or work. Focusing on developing and analyzing terminology requires devoting extra time and effort that may not always be prioritized or even possible. Also, it cannot be demanded of every deaf person entering a new field with an interpreter to possess training or even experience in lexicography. From an interpreter's point of view, terminological co-operation can and should always be proposed but not required.

The survey results indicate a growing concern of the user profile of the term bank becoming narrow; some responses claimed that the bank is currently being used only by its administration and the active few who participate in collecting terms. Although this study reveals that it is actually also being used by regular working interpreters, the risk is real and the problem should be addressed in near future. Many respondents did, however, emphasize the importance of sharing the knowledge and learning to analyze together the presented terminology. These were also seen as key points for improving their professional, specifically linguistic, competence and thus the quality of service for their customers. Further research would help in identifying the role of the shared process of analyzing terminology within the general notion of reflective practice.

As the current Language Policy for Sign Languages of Finland (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010) reports, quality of interpreting services is a much debated issue within the language community. Taking into account the possibilities this tool provides for restoring at least a part of the interpreters' knowledge of professional terminology and the current users' willingness to analyze it with colleagues and customers especially, this activity can be seen as an active effort to address the quality problem.

In keeping with how Bernard Spolsky (2009) defines theory of language policy, the terminology work explained in this study clearly presents a conscious and explicit effort to support language management. Interpreting is a domain connecting with and operating in various fields of life. The linguistic variation interpreters in general are exposed to in their profession exceeds that of a regular language user. Sign language interpreters are especially challenged by the limited access to natural language learning environments and tools that would help them in dealing with huge linguistic variation and lexical gaps. Equipping them with proper tools for terminological analyzing they could provide the field of Sign Language Studies, as well as Interpreting Studies more broadly; an insight into lexical development taking place in interaction with the participants of interpreting.

The term bank introduced here is not considered to be a perfect and complete tool. The user survey revealed extensive criticism towards the current categorization system of the terms; not being able to find what one is looking for is understandably causing frustration and diminishing motivation to use the tool. Also, criticism by Päivi Rainò (2010) towards lexical tools that reinforce arbitrary language management and exploitation of sign language cannot be ignored. A virtual, monolingual sign language dictionary, fully representing the polysynthetic nature of the languages lexicon would undoubtedly be welcomed by interpreters. This study indicates, however, that participation even in describing and choosing lexicon on the basis of their equivalents in a spoken or written language is actually developing the interpreters' skills to critically analyze language through increased metalinguistic awareness.

The situations where new terminology is needed can be addressed by corpus planning. Although the content of the Via term bank is not purposefully created for the bank as such, many of the terms are the results of active efforts to deal with new concepts in various fields. As Timothy Reagan (2010) defines, this lexical modernization can involve compounding of existing signs, borrowing from both signed and spoken languages and morphological processes. It is fundamentally clear that this process should be driven by native users of the language. For reasons mentioned earlier in this section, and also in literature by Rainò (2006), there are occasions when interpreters are put in between languages trying to relay condense language of a specified, professional field in a non-standardized language that relies widely on idiolectal variation and polysyntheticism. This study seeks to offer a pragmatic way of addressing the dilemma.

While the concern of interpreters taking over ownership of sign language are to be taken seriously, the benefit to the language community of the interpreters' analyzing process concerning terminology should not be disregarded either. A suggestion rising from the survey results, that the terms should be collected with thorough consideration and marked with indication of the context and frequency of their use as well as their emergence, could enhance the tool and make its supportive nature towards language policy more transparent.

The need for sign language interpreters to process and analyze evolving terminology is bound to remain. 87% of the respondents of the user survey stated they would miss the term bank if it was closed down. Quite a few comments, however, indicated a passive attitude towards the current terminology work; it would be easier to have the terminology ready and at use when needed and, preferably, produced by or at least with native users. While this desire remains to be realized, it is

the duty of active professionals to see that the language management practices they carry out, from language policy perspective, serve progressive and liberating rather than oppressive ends.

## 5 Conclusion

The aim of this study is to introduce an approach to terminology work, specifically an online terminology database maintained by a group of SLIs and to examine the role of this method in relation to the professional development of the practitioners and in relation to issues of language policy, management and planning.

Interpreters are not professionals in terminology work, but they are, however professional language users who need to be aware of and sensitive to sometimes enormous linguistic variations, whether regional, social, contextual or idiolectal. This study views the current state of FinSL as described in the Language Policy for Sign Languages of Finland (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland & Finnish Association of the Deaf 2010) and its connections to the interpreters' professional competence. The policy draws a clear picture of the current state of FinSL and the expectations and challenges presented to sign language interpreting; the need to improve the quality of interpreting to secure full linguistic rights to sign language users regardless of the complexity in learning the natural features and nuances of the language.

Via term bank was established to support the work of its interpreters and their cooperation with the sign language using customers by providing an interactive platform for collecting and commenting existing but previously unrecorded terminology. Having been in use for over seven years, it was timely for the administration of the bank to request for a study to find out whether the employees use the term bank according to the employer's expectations and whether the interpreters consider it as a suitable tool for developing their professional skills. The data for this study was collected through carrying out an online survey for the current users of the term bank, embedding both qualitative and quantitative elements.

The results reveal that the term bank is mainly used purposefully for learning, either prior or right after an assignment but also more incidentally for revision of terminology. Lexical learning taking place covers a vast variety of aims focusing on anything from individual signs and their features to familiarizing with whole new fields. The interpreters' usage is emphasized by viewing and reviewing rather than actively commenting the content, although it clearly also induces interaction with colleagues, thus generating a more collective learning process outside the immediate use of the

term bank. The use of the bank was also reported to stimulate interaction with customers which can be seen as allowing participatory and democratic terminology development process.

The importance of co-operation with native language users in terminology work was emphasized in the survey results, pointing out that it is vital for the future of the term bank to see more customer involvement on all levels: producing material, commenting the contents and administering it. This can be one way of addressing the growing concern of the users and prevent the bank from becoming an elitist tool used only by few. Co-operation with interpreters more generally, lexicographers, terminologists and specialists of various fields should also be considered.

This study displays the general use of an individual term bank created and used mainly by interpreters. For further research it would be interesting to focus on analyzing individual cases of terminology development process involving deaf customers and interpreters working together in new fields. Observing their work and interviewing them could give valuable information of how new terminology comes into existence and evolves in such cooperative efforts by further studies within the field of Sign Language Studies.

Further study in the field of Interpreting Studies, particularly concerning interpreters' collective process of developing metalinguistic skills, could be helpful in understanding the interpreting process as a collective approach and applied in planning further training for working interpreters. In addition to research, targeted training for interpreters on terminology work, lexicography and sign linguistics would benefit both interpreters and their customers.

The results of this study bring forth sign language interpreters who wish to have an active role in terminology work. Participating in analyzing terminology helps them to develop their metalinguistic awareness which, in turn, helps them to address linguistic challenges in their daily work. They are willing and open to collaborating with the native sign language users in a democratic and progressive process of language management to produce adequate terminology that is identified also with the society.

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## Appendix 1: Template for the pilot study on usability

### Usability template for evaluating Via term bank

Please choose only one option of each feature.

Indicator	functions	functions partly	does not function
1. Navigation. Is the system visual and informative in helping you find information?			
2. Functionality. How clear and understandable are the functions?			
3. User control. Easiness of navigation.			
4. Language use. How understandable is the language, in both texts and videos?			
5. Online help and user guidance.			
6. System feedback. Is it clear what you can and cannot do?			
7. Accessibility.			
8. Consistency. Is the content presented in a consistent way?			
9. Error prevention and correction.			
10. Architectural and visual clarity of the system.			

Compiled after Marcos et al. (2006), in 'Usability evaluation of online terminology databases' <http://www.hipertext.net/english/pag1017.htm>.

### In addition

Any general notions, suggestions and questions concerning usability of the term bank as well as additions to the above evaluation are welcome either in text or as a signed video clip attached to e-mail.

## Appendix 2: Online survey questions for Via term bank users

1. Length of experience with Sign Language
  - ☐ Less than 5 years
  - ☐ 5-7 years
  - ☐ 8-10 years
  - ☐ 11-15 years
  - ☐ More than 15 years
  - ☐ Native language user
2. Role as term bank user
  - ☐ Via employee
  - ☐ Via member
  - ☐ Via service user (continue from question 6)
  - ☐ Co-operation partner of Via term bank (continue from question 6)
  - ☐ Interpreter trainee at Via (continue from question 6)
3. Length of experience as graduated Sign Language interpreter
  - ☐ Less than 2 years
  - ☐ 3-5 years
  - ☐ 6-10 years
  - ☐ 11-15 years
  - ☐ More than 15 years
4. Length of experience at Via
  - ☐ Less than one year
  - ☐ 1-3 years
  - ☐ 4-7 years
  - ☐ More than 7 years
5. Employment status at Via
  - ☐ Hired on hourly basis
  - ☐ Hired for a fixed term
  - ☐ Continuous contract
6. Have you participated in producing new material for the bank (i.e. collecting terms, recording videos for terms)?
  - ☐ Yes.
  - ☐ No.
7. How often do you approximately visit the term bank?

- Almost daily.
- Weekly.
- A few times per month.
- A few times per year.
- Less than every year.
- Never.

8. For how long do you typically use the term bank per visit?

- A few minutes.
- From 15 minutes to half an hour.
- An hour.
- Several hours.
- I don't know.
- I don't use the term bank.

9. When do you visit it? Please mark all suitable options.

- Prior to assignment to familiarize with new terminology.
- After an assignment when I've recognized some new terminology.
- Every now and then without any particular aim.
- Regularly to see the content systematically.
- I don't use the term bank.

10. Is there some other kind of situation for visiting term bank?

11. What do you do when you visit term bank? Please mark all suitable options.

- I look for terms in particular fields from certain categories.
- I look for terms through the search tool.
- I flick through the categories and their content randomly.
- I search for comments on the terms.
- I write comments on the terms.
- I discuss the terms in the bank with colleagues and/or customers.
- I don't use the term bank.

12. Is there something else you do when visiting term bank?

13. What skills do you practice when using Via term bank? Please mark all suitable options.

- Language skills.
- Information retrieval skills.
- Argumentation skills.
- Information processing and analyzing skills.
- I don't use the term bank.

14. Are there some other skills you practice when using Via term bank?

15. What advantages does the use of Via term bank offer you? Please mark all suitable options.

- ☐ It helps me prepare lexically for interpreting.
- ☐ It's a good tool to learn new concepts in Finnish.
- ☐ It's a good tool to learn new concepts in Finnish Sign Language.
- ☐ It's a good place to share and discuss working languages and their features.
- ☐ It makes me more aware of my working languages.
- ☐ It doesn't offer any particular advantage.

16. Does the term bank offer some other advantages?

17. What disadvantages does the use of Via term bank have? Please mark all suitable options.

- ☐ There are too many terms missing.
- ☐ It is difficult to use.
- ☐ New content is added too slowly.
- ☐ The content is organized confusingly.
- ☐ Not known.

18. Does the term bank have some other disadvantages?

19. What kind of new needs would you have for using Via term bank?

20. How does the use of Via term bank impact your activity in interpreting? Please mark all suitable options.

- ☐ I use actively its terms.
- ☐ I relate differently to terminology than before using the term bank.
- ☐ Term bank is one of the tools I use for professional development.
- ☐ I discuss the contents of the bank with sign language users and/or interpreters.
- ☐ Using the term bank does not affect me at all.
- ☐ I don't use the term bank.

21. How do colleagues / customers react when you introduce terminology from the term bank?

*The Finnish Deaf Association and the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland state in their 'Language policy for Sign Languages of Finland', published in 2010, that Sign Language work is carried out, in addition to these organizations, a group of other actors. Markku Jokinen mentions for example Sign Language interpreters as partners to the Sign Language using community and calls for sharing the responsibility in maintaining and developing the language. These statements are referred to in the next question by "a language policy act".*

22. How do you see the general significance of Via term bank in the long run? Please mark all suitable options.

- ☐ It is a tool for professional development for interpreters.
- ☐ It is a form of co-operation for interpreters and their sign language using customers.
- ☐ It is a language policy act supporting the status of Finnish Sign Language.
- ☐ It is a language policy act inhibiting the status of Finnish Sign Language.
- ☐ It bears no special significance.

23. Please motivate / define your previous answer!

24. If the term bank would be closed, would you miss it?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No.

25. Please share any other thoughts concerning Via term bank or feedback concerning this survey!